



BULLETIN

Southampton Business Improvement Area

MAY 2026

Here's your quick look at what's on across the BIA and beyond - opportunities, updates, and events you won't want to miss!

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Welcome to Town!

We're delighted to see that Kawartha Dairy has opened a coporate store in Mitch and Janis Birney's building on High Street. Not only great ice cream cones, they also sell tubs of ice cream, milk, butter and eggs as well as small snacks like Picards Nuts!

May 16 Grand Reopening - Early Member Survey Results

Most core High Street merchants participated - sidewalk displays, open doors, and a last-minute draw for a Southampton Gift Pack that drew over 1,300 ballots. (The winner is a seasonal resident.)

Sales impact: 70% saw a significant or moderate increase over last year; 20% no change; 10% a slight increase.

Overall value: 50% found the event somewhat beneficial, 20% very beneficial, 20% neutral, 10% not beneficial - likely service businesses or those outside the core.

Repeat on long weekends? 60% yes, 30% possibly, 10% no.

What would help most this summer?

70% - more activations like May 16 (live music, popcorn, street games)

40% - member spotlight reels on social (want to be featured? Let us know!)

50% - more wayfinding signage to High Street from the Coliseum, Museum, and Town Hall

20% - extended Thursday hours to align with Cruise Nights (starting June)

30% - BIA socials sharing member posts for sales, events, or charity involvement

Additional comments highlighted: construction on Hwy 21 is causing significant delays and frustration – 30-minute waits at the bridge. We'll look into what can be requested. Other suggestions included EV charging, and background or live street music to create atmosphere, with Harbour Nights in Owen Sound cited as a model.

Upcoming Events and Promotions

Are people asking you what's going on in Town? Direct them to the [BIA website calendar](#) – we try to include the events that we're made aware of. Bookmarks with events will be distributed in the coming weeks and there will also a large poster on the West facing window of the Range Light Replica at the Town Hall.

The Town is encouraging all event organisers to post their events on exploretheshores.ca

Canada Day – events and fireworks will be at Pioneer Park this year. The BIA is working on bringing live music to High Street in the afternoon and supplying some festive decor to our Member businesses – we'll let you know what we'll have for you to pick up at a central location!

August Long Weekend – Southampton Arts Festival Here is [The Sponsorship Package](#) if you would like to contribute.

The BIA is looking for live music on the Saturday afternoon on High St.

OBIAA Conference Overview

Lisa and I returned from the OBIAA Conference energized and full of ideas.

As a Board Member, I joined several panels including main street construction mitigation .and overall BIA success. A highlight: the SBIA and the Town received an Award of Merit for our efforts supporting local businesses through construction – ongoing communication, the Love Local shop-and-win campaign, signage, and social and radio campaigns. A new paid social campaign has launched for this season.

We were also encouraged by a clear commitment from OBIAA and the Province to small, rural BIAs – acknowledging the unique challenges of seasonality, tight budgets, and volunteer scarcity. Here's what we're working on:

Experience HWY 21 – A collective of BIAs spanning Goderich, Kincardine, Port Elgin, Southampton, and Owen Sound River District. After four meetings, we're now cross-promoting events on [@experiencehwy21](#). Targeting visitors within a 60km radius – people looking for a day trip with lunch, shopping, and something cultural – is a smart strategy for all of us.

Elect Respect Pledge – Introduced at the opening keynote, this initiative promotes civility and respect in public life. Our Board has adopted the resolution and is encouraging the Municipality to do the same. Individuals can sign too.

TIAO Membership – We've joined the [Tourism Industry Association of Ontario](#) at a special BIA rate. As the recognized voice of tourism in Ontario, TIAO advocates for the industry at the government level. We're exploring how their resources can benefit our members.

Town Business Retention and Expansion Survey – If you have 10 spare minutes, please complete the attached survey. Your feedback will help the Town better understand the needs, challenges, opportunities, and priorities of local businesses as we develop our Economic Development Plan. You can find the survey [here](#) Complete the Business Retention and Expansion Survey

TMU Case Study — Students in an Economic Development programme at Toronto Metropolitan University will be developing strategies to grow Southampton's shoulder season traffic. I'll be presenting the project brief in June, with student proposals arriving later in the summer. Read the brief [here](#).

Advertising & Visibility — Watch for Southampton BIA print ads in Rampt Magazine and the Sauble Surf newspaper. And exciting news: Escarpment Magazine is featuring Southampton in an 8-page spread as they expand their reach to Lake Huron. Interested in advertising? Here's their [rate card](#).

Your Business's visibility and on-line presence

Google Business Listing — Is yours set up and current? An up-to-date listing helps customers find your hours, location, and reviews. Need help? Lisa's happy to walk through it with you. Email her at coordinator@southamptonbia.com

RTO7

Get your business listed on [Bruce Grey Simcoe](#), the consumer-facing site people use to plan where to go and what to do. Through [RTO7](#) (the back end), you can also list events, access free training, and explore programmes that are often free or partially funded.

County Funding

[Spruce the Bruce](#) still has some grant money available!

If you're a High Street facing business, call and see what might be available for you!

County Training

Details on upcoming training webinars may be found [here](#). Upcoming sessions focus on Instagram Foundations, Meta Business Suite Planner, Creating and Editing Reels for socials. They also have some training sessions on a variety of subjects on YouTube [here](#).

Bike Month

Learn more about [Bruce County's Smart Commute](#) programme including [Bike Month](#) contest!

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me direct, I'm always happy to chat. If you'd like to volunteer to sit on a Committee or help with a specific initiative, let me know!!!



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